

Eaton, Alvord and Bardeen: Hamilton, New York & Colgate University

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This article is dedicated to the memory of William R. "Bill" Weber (1919-2003)

Located in Madison County, the village of Hamilton, New York is home to Colgate University. The University traces its origins back to 1819, having been founded originally as the Baptist Education Society of the State of New York. In 1846, the institution's name was changed to Madison University, which was again changed to Colgate University in 1890, recognizing nearly seventy years of continuous involvement and service by the Colgate family. Three residents of Hamilton, NY and alumni of Colgate University, William Colgate Eaton, Frederick Reed Alvord and Dr. Wallace S. Bardeen, shared an interest in numismatics, with Eaton and Alvord occupying important roles in the collecting of United States half cents.

William Colgate Eaton (1851-1936)

William Colgate Eaton was born in Hamilton, New York on February 4, 1851. Named after the Colgate family who were friends of his father, he was the youngest of the six children of George Washington Eaton and Eliza H. Eaton nee Boardman. George Washington Eaton "graduated at Union College, Schenectady, N.Y.; became a professor of Ancient History and languages at Georgetown College, Ky., and also a leading Baptist clergyman, a leading man in his denomination. In 1833 he was a professor and for many years president of Colgate University, Hamilton, N.Y. He was a genial man with a winning manner which made him very popular. He died August 3, 1872 at Hamilton, N.Y.; his wife died at Library, Mo., January 18, 1898, aged 86 years."¹

The Colgate University Library Special Collections houses the diaries of Eliza Eaton.² While there is nothing contained within these diaries that specifically relates to W.C. Eaton's numismatic interests, one does sense that the baby of the family, nicknamed Willis, was doted upon by the entire family, particularly his mother. The

¹ Nellie Zada Rice Molyneux, *History Genealogical and Biographical of the Eaton Families*, (C.W. Bardeen: Syracuse, N.Y., 1911): 658.

² Carl Peterson, Head of the Special Collections Library of Colgate University, was of great assistance in providing access to these diaries and other information relating to W.C. Eaton and F. R. Alvord.

entry for Friday, January 27, 1860 reads, "It is a pleasure to teach Willis. He learns so easily. His lessons were perfect today. James [his older brother] teaches him in Intillectual [sic] Arithmetic & writing & Mary [his older sister] is to give him lessons in drawing." On the occasion of his eleventh birthday (February 4, 1862), she writes, "I commenced reading aloud to him the 'Lady of the Lake.' He was much interested." On Saturday, October 25, 1862 she informs that "Mr. Burnham commenced giving Willis half hour music lessons today." These lessons followed like clockwork, duly noted in the diary nearly every week. Later that year, she reports that "Willis had a boil cut from his jaw by Dr. Beardsly after inhaling a half pint of Ether administered by Dr. Bardine [Bardeen]. He was intensely insensible to the pain & did not suffer any injurious effects from the Ether." Dr. Bardeen, a dentist, happened to be the father of Dr. Wallace S. Bardeen, whose collection of half cents Eaton would later come to acquire.

In a letter to the editor dated November 21, 1921 that appeared in *The Numismatist*, W. C. Eaton had responded to the question, "When, where and why did you start to collect coins?" Eaton related the story of collecting Civil War cents and how he "laboriously bored two holes in each cent and strung them together in a chain wired together, my boring machine consisting of a common needle broken through the eye. The chain, I remember, was just seven feet long. Some chain, but, alas, as I realized later, the ruin of the coins! My collection having been destroyed by the fire, coin collecting fell into abeyance till I was well advanced in age and with a ten-year-old kid."³ His mother's diaries make no mention of this collection of twice-holed cents, but the diary for 1861 was not available at Colgate University. However, "the fire" so casually mentioned in passing is described in this diary entry from Sunday, December 14, 1862: "Attended church this morning. While on our way to chapel at 2:00, Willis looking back exclaimed Father! Our house is on fire! Sure enough the smoke was issuing from every shingle. Through the almost superhuman efforts of citizens and students, the fire was arrested before much was burned in the first story, though every door, window and [illegible] was torn off and the house almost a wreck."

Having survived the fire, Eaton "attended the Hamilton Union School, and the Grammar School of Madison County, which later became Colgate Academy. He

³ W.C. Eaton, "Letter to the Editor," *The Numismatist* 34 (December, 1921): 577-578. Nancy Green, ANA Librarian, kindly supplied this citation.

graduated from Madison (Colgate) University in 1869, at the youthful age of 18. He remained in Hamilton for a few years after his graduation being graduate Editor of the 'Madisonensis' (now the 'Maroon') from 1869 to 1870, and an interim editor of the Hamilton Republican in 1870."⁴ He entered the U.S. Naval Academy in 1872, graduating in 1874. "The class of 1874 consisted of 30 Cadet Midshipman graduates who entered the Academy in 1870 and 10 Cadet Engineer graduates who entered in 1872. Eaton was one of the ten Cadet Engineers. Upon graduation, Eaton ranked 3rd among the Cadet Engineer graduates."⁵

Thereupon followed a long and distinguished career in the U.S. Navy. "His first assignment was to the U.S. Flagship 'Worcester,' and this was followed by cruises all over the world. In 1875 and 1876 he cruised on the U.S.S. 'Lackawanna' which took him to various South American ports and to the Hawaiian Islands. On the U.S.S. 'Quinnebaug' from 1878 to 1881 he visited ports in North Africa, Turkey, the Holy Land, France, Belgium, Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Germany and England."⁶ Eaton earned a PhD from Colgate University in 1882. He then served on the U.S.S. 'Alliance' from 1885 to 1888, visiting Spain, the Mediterranean, the coast of East Africa, South Africa and South America. "In September of 1888 he was detailed by the Navy Department to Madison (Colgate) University, where he established and became the head of a department of Engineering."⁷ He was married to Miss Elizabeth "Lizzie" Blish of Brooklyn on September 6, 1890 and a year later he departed, with his bride, for the China Station. The couple's only child, William West Eaton, was born on August 7, 1893.

⁴ *The Hamilton Republican*, June 4, 1936

⁵ Gary A. LaValley, Archivist of the U.S. Naval Academy, supplied this information.

⁶ *The Hamilton Republican*, June 4, 1936

⁷ *The Hamilton Republican*, June 4, 1936.



William C. Eaton, PhD
Passed Assistant Engineer, U.S.N.,
Professor of Engineering
1889

W. C. Eaton continued his naval career, serving as chief engineer on the 'Amphitrite' during the Spanish-American War and also taking part in the bombardment of San Juan in 1898. "From 1899 to 1900, he was fleet engineer of the Pacific Squadron, attached to the flagship 'Philadelphia'."⁸ He then served as Inspector of Engineering and Ordnance Material for the New York and New Jersey district. He "retired" in 1908, but was kept on active service for another year. In 1909, he returned home to Hamilton, New York, but during World War I, he was recalled to active service. Headquartered in Cincinnati, he then served from 1917 to 1919 as Chief Inspector of Naval Material. He supervised an inspection force of 65, responsible for inspecting and approving over 6,000 contracts that totaled several hundred million dollars.

⁸ *The Hamilton Republican*, June 4, 1936.

In addition to these professional activities, the Commodore was extremely active in other areas. He was a member of the Society of Naval Engineers, the American Geographical Society, the Luther Burbank Society (honorary), the Baptist Education Society of New York (honorary vice-president), the Citizens' and the Game Club of Hamilton, and a president of the Hamilton Improvement Association. He was also a Knight Templar and 32nd degree Mason, and a member of the Sigma Phi and Phi Beta Kappa fraternities, Noble of the Mystic Shrine, and a founder and life member of the Mystic Order of Veiled Prophets of the Enchanted Realm. In the spare time that remained after all of these activities, he also collected coins. He wrote two articles on half cents,⁹ as well as a series of articles on the Flying Eagle Cents of 1857¹⁰ and 1858.¹¹



His wife preceded him in death in 1929, and the Commodore died after a brief illness on June 1, 1936. His obituary in the Hamilton Republican began "The Commodore is dead. A life is ended that, for 85 years from birth to old age, was indissolubly linked with Hamilton and its people. The far corners of the earth, to which his professional duties called him, never weaned him from his love for the place of his birth, and when his active service was over, he was quick to return here to live out his days."¹² His son, William, survived him.

Eaton's last will and testament of April 29, 1929 gives some indication of the character of the Commodore. It reads: "First, I direct that all my just debts and funeral expenses be paid, which funeral I request be held with no greater expense than consistent with proper decorum [sic]."

⁹ W.C. Eaton, "The Recut Dies of U.S. Half Cents," *The Numismatist* 34 (November 1921): 518-523 and "The Recut Dies of U.S. Half Cents. Corrections and Addenda," *The Numismatist* 34 (December 1921): 564-5. See *Penny-Wise* XIX (1985), pp. 26-27 for Bill Weber's appreciation of Eaton, "A Forgotten Half Cent Patron, Commodore W.C. Eaton."

¹⁰ W.C. Eaton, "The Eagle Cents of 1857," *The Numismatist* 34 (May 1921): 191-193.

¹¹ W.C. Eaton, "The Eagle Cents of 1858," *The Numismatist* 29 (January 1916): 7-9, *The Numismatist* 33 (November 1920): 506, and *The Numismatist* 34 (March 1921): 87-89.

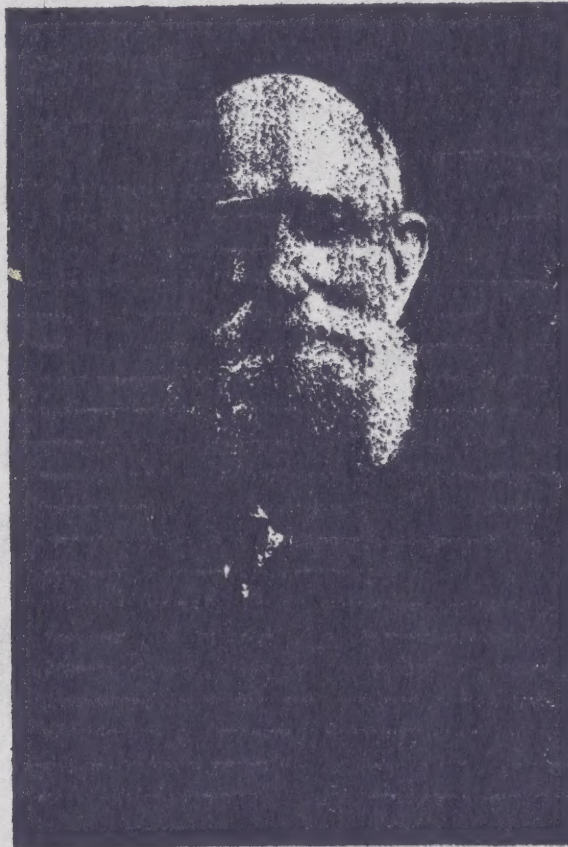
¹² *The Hamilton Republican*, June 4, 1936.

Second. – I give and bequeath to my beloved son, William West Eaton, my gold watch, to be held in trust by him for my beloved grandson, Torrey Wade Eaton, said watch to be given him whenever my said son may deem it advisable to do so.

Third. – I give, devise and bequeath to my beloved son, William West Eaton, all the rest, residue and remainder of my property, both real and personal, of which I may die possessed.

Fourth. – While imposing no obligation, not being able to foresee the future financial condition of my said son, it is my desire, if it can be done without material injury to himself or family, that one tenth of such income as may be derived from my residuary estate be devoted to benevolence, that some of the little good I may have done during my life may live after me....”

William West Eaton married Amie Torrey Walker, who had been born in Indiana on January 8, 1894. Their only child, Torrey Wade Eaton, was born in New York City on November 7, 1919. William West Eaton died on June 2, 1977 in Los Angeles, CA at the age of 83. His wife Amie died on January 23, 1987 in Pasadena, CA at the age of 93.



Commodore William Colgate Eaton in 1934

Frederick Reed Alvord (1868-1923)

Frederick Reed "Fred" Alvord was born in Marcellus, New York on March 16, 1868, the son of Charles Theodore and Cornelia Alvord. His father owned and operated the Park House, forerunner of the Colgate Inn, from 1875 to 1894, and served as Hamilton's first street commissioner.¹³ F.R. Alvord was educated at the Colgate Academy, and in 1889 he began work as a bookkeeper for what was to become the New York Wire Cloth Company. "Francis J. Root founded the Hamilton Wire Cloth Company of Hamilton, New York, in 1888. He then merged this company with three other wire weavers: P.S. deWitt & Sons of Brooklyn, New York; Homer Wire Cloth of Homer, New York; and York Wire Cloth of York, Pennsylvania. In 1892 he renamed the company New York Wire Cloth with general offices in New York City."¹⁴ Alvord moved to York, Pennsylvania in 1894 to serve as the general manager of the York, Pennsylvania manufacturing plant of New York Wire Cloth. He and his wife Elizabeth had two children, Frederick Reed, Jr.¹⁵ and Nina.¹⁶ F.R. Alvord died at 5:00 a.m. on Friday, November 1, 1923 at his home in McClellans Heights in York, Pennsylvania. His obituary stated that "the body will be taken on the 6:15 train over the Pennsylvania railroad to Hamilton, N.Y., for further services and internment. The body will be accompanied by his children and relatives, Mrs. Alvord being too ill to leave home."¹⁷

The Director's Minutes of the New York Wire Cloth Company Board are still in existence, and they provide some additional information concerning Alvord.¹⁸ Board meetings were held in the company's New York office located in the Woolworth Building at 233 Broadway. A special meeting of the New York Wire Cloth Board was held on November 7, 1923. At that time, the following resolution was offered by F.J. Root and seconded by J.H. DeWitt: "Resolved, that this Board wishes to go on record in its appreciation of the continuously faithful and devoted services rendered by Mr. Frederick Reed Alvord, in the capacity of Factory Manager of the plants of this Company

¹³ *The Mid-York Weekly*, Thursday, May 7, 1998.

¹⁴ <http://www.ny-wire.com/company/history.html>

¹⁵ F. Reed Alvord, Jr. (1909-1998) was a 1931 graduate of Colgate University, and later served as Assistant to the President and Secretary of the University at his alma mater.

¹⁶ Nina Alvord (1898-1972) married Walter S. Ehrenfield, a prominent industrialist in York, Pennsylvania.

¹⁷ *The York Dispatch*, Friday, November 2, 1923: 32.

¹⁸ Barry Douglas, President of the New York Wire Company, kindly provided access to these materials. For more information on the company, see <http://www.ny-wire.com>.

during the past 32 years and to extend its sincere sympathy to Mrs. Alvord and immediate family for the great loss they have sustained. Resolved that the Treasurer of this Company is authorized and directed to pay immediately to Mrs. F.R. Alvord, the sum of \$2,166.68 which represents the salary her husband would have received up to the end of the present calendar year, December 31st 1923."

Earlier Director's Minutes indicate that Alvord's annual salary as of July 1, 1905 was \$4,000, and "should the net profits of the company for the year ending June 30, 1906 be equal to, or exceeding 10% on its capital, the salary of the manager should be increased \$1,000.00, making the total salary \$5,000.00 for the year." Business must have been good, for Alvord received a bonus of \$1,500 on September 1, 1905. From 1908 through 1918, Alvord's annual salary was \$6,000 with an occasional bonus thrown in. Then in 1919, his salary was increased to \$8,000 and he received a bonus in the amount of \$3,000. The following year Alvord was paid \$13,000 plus a commission of 2½% on the net profits for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1921. In 1922 and 1923, the salary remained at \$13,000 and a commission was awarded on similar terms.

Alvord's last will and testament had been signed on August 11, 1919 and was filed on November 8, 1923. In it he bequeaths to his wife, Elizabeth Parker Alvord, "all my books, pictures, silverware, jewelry, clothing, carpets, rugs, chinaware, household furniture, automobile, and generally all my personal effects and belongings of every kind or nature." The balance of his property and estate was put into a trust managed by the Provident Trust Company of Philadelphia. On February 14, 1924, this company performed an "inventory and appraisal of the goods and chattels, rights and credits which were of Fred Reed Alvord, late of Spring Garden township in the county of York." The estate was summarized as follows:

Cash	\$4,243.28
Bonds	\$127,350.75
Stocks	\$99,884.00
Miscellaneous	<u>\$7,174.50</u>
Total:	\$238,652.53

Adjusting for inflation, this is equivalent to approximately \$2,500,000 in current dollars.

The appraisers itemized the "miscellaneous" category in great detail, on a room-by-room basis. For example, Alvord liked to listen to the radio, for in the living room is

listed a "Freed-Eiseman Neutrodyne Receiver, Model N-R-5" that was valued at \$200.00. Even the contents of the cellar were inventoried in detail:

15 tons coal at \$14.00	210.00
4 step ladders	3.50
4 snow shovels	2.00
1 lot wood	5.00
3 lawn movers	30.00
1 lawn trimmer	8.00
4 baskets	1.50

In addition, the family cars were also listed -- a 1923 Buick 7 passenger sedan valued at \$1,500 and a 1923 Buick 4 passenger coupe also valued at \$1,500.

Yet, nowhere in this very detailed inventory is there *any* mention made of *any* coin collection. One can only assume that Alvord's half cent collection was considered part of the "personal effects and belongings of every kind or nature" that were bequeathed to Mrs. Alvord. Roger Cohen lamented the fact that Alvord's obituary made no mention that Alvord had been a prominent coin collector, and stated, "It can only be surmised that his family did not want this to be general knowledge or the family did not consider his coin collecting to be of any significance."¹⁹ Based on the evidence present in Alvord's will and the subsequent appraisal of his estate, it would certainly seem that the latter was the case. Furthermore, consider the fact that the June 9, 1924 S.H. Chapman sale of the Alvord Collection realized \$2,743.85. This amount represented a little over 1% of the value of the entire estate, and *less* than the appraised value of Alvord's two cars!

Dr. Wallace S. Bardeen (1866-1921)

Dr. Wallace S. Bardeen was born December 22, 1866, the youngest of the six children of Americus Vespuccius Bardeen and Cornelia R. Bardeen nee Campbell. A.V. Bardeen "was a dentist practicing in Hamilton and was elected president of the Hamilton Village in 1873. He lived on Broad Street across from the entrance to Colgate University. He was an accomplished metalsmith and made gold and silvery jewelry."²⁰

¹⁹ Roger S. Cohen, Jr., *American Half Cents*, 2nd ed. (Arlington, VA: Wigglesworth & Ghatt, 1982): xviii.

²⁰ William A. Bardeen, *The Barden-Bardeen Genealogy*, (Baltimore, MD: Gateway Press, 1993): 157.

W.S. Bardeen was a student at Colgate Academy, where he was a member of Delta Kappa Epsilon, and was a graduate of the Boston Dental School. He married Adelaide Edgen Stanley on September 14, 1892 and practiced dentistry with his father in Hamilton. The couple had no children. Bardeen died of pneumonia on April 6, 1921. The funeral was held at the Baptist Church, where "six of Dr. Bardeen's intimate friends served as bearers," including "Mr. Fred Alvord of York, Pa."²¹

Bardeen is at best a minor figure in U.S. numismatic history. His collection, "sold by order of the executrix," comprised lots 2272 through 2481 of the July 25-27, 1922 Henry Chapman sale. This rather eclectic collection included American Colonial And State Coins (40 lots), First U.S. Cents (2 lots), Washington Coins and Tokens (19 lots), United States Cents (98 lots), Hard Times Tokens, 1834-1841 (5 lots), Foreign Silver Coins (7 lots), and Copper Coins (39 lots). It would seem that Bardeen's half cents, none of which were included in this sale, had been purchased as a group by W.C. Eaton prior to this 1922 Chapman sale. In describing the May 7-8, 1929 Henry Chapman sale of the Commodore W.C. Eaton Collection, William H. De Shon states, "At the auction there were sold two consignments of United States half cents. One was early assembled by the commodore. The other was the famous 'Bardeen Collection' he [Eaton] acquired subsequently."²² The Bardeen Collection comprises lots 973 through 1055 of the Henry Chapman sale of the Eaton Collection.

The Eaton Collection

The details of the sale of the Alvord Collection are well known, as the collection was cataloged by S. H. Chapman, and sold on June 9, 1924. The sale of the Eaton Collection, however, is not quite as straightforward. It is common knowledge that Eaton's coin collection, including a number of half cents, was sold in the aforementioned Henry Chapman sale of 1929. However, in discussing a possible new variety of 1804 half cent, Breen states, "this [half cent] was not in the 1929 Henry Chapman auction of

²¹ *The Hamilton Republican*, Thursday, April 7, 1921.

²² *The Utica Observer-Dispatch*, May 27, 1929.

the Eaton collection, but his half cents are known to have been dispersed earlier."²³
 Breen, unfortunately, provides no details of this earlier dispersal.

However, specific, detailed information is available in this remarkable announcement, quoted in its entirety, which appeared in the June 1928 *Guttag's Coin Bulletin*:

"Famous Half Cent Collection

We are pleased to announce that the well known collector and numismatic student, Commodore W. C. C. [sic] Eaton, has placed his famous collection of half cents in our hands for sale. In undertaking this sale we have felt that it would not be right to break up the result of years of patient research and effort without first offering the collection in its entirety and in doing so attention is invited to the fact that with the exceptions of the patterns in the '30s and '40s,²⁴ which Commodore Eaton did not collect, it is absolutely complete with every type listed by Gilbert, and is the only complete one ever offered or likely to be: it being more complete even than the famous Alvord collection (with above exceptions), that collection lacking at least two of Gilbert's types as well as many unlisted sub-varieties contained in the collection. It may be of interest to note that it was Commodore Eaton, himself a collector for many years previously, who induced Mr. Alvord to collect, after which they collaborated as specialists, sending for and receiving the entire stocks of half cents of the principal dealers for study and investigation. In this way over fifty thousand half cents were examined, the new discoveries and all the rarities naturally being retained. This explains the many sub-varieties of the rarities to be found in this collection, in many cases more than exist at all outside the collection, culled from the stocks of dealers before Gilbert's book was issued and their rarity became known. In addition the stocks of dealers were re-examined and all auction lists carefully scrutinized for many years. It was as a result of the new discoveries in this study that finally led to the preparation and publication of Gilbert's work.

This collection is also far more complete in sub-varieties than the Alvord

²³ Walter Breen, *Walter Breen's Encyclopedia of United States Half Cents 1793-1857* (South Gate, CA: American Institute of Numismatic Research, 1983): 257.

²⁴ One can infer this to mean the proof-only issues.

collection and as an example of this reference may be made to the sixty varieties and sub-varieties of the half cents of 1794 probably more than exist in good condition in all the dealers stocks in the country as against but twenty six in the Alvord collection. The entire collection numbering some four hundred and fifty half cents is about twice the size of the Alvord collection. For a collector this is a wonderful, and doubtless only, opportunity to secure the half cents necessary to fill their vacant spaces: for while the entire list of the patterns in the '30s and '40s can be picked up from time to time, and are therefore but a matter of money, (Mr. Alvord secured the entire list, with exception of only two of the restrikes, in a comparatively few months after Gilbert's book was published) it will undoubtedly be the last chance in a lifetime to secure the great rarities, especially those believed to be unique. So to the collector who hopes to fill these spaces the message would appropriately be 'Now or never.'

From his many years of examination of dealer's stocks and study of catalogues, it may be said with confidence that there can exist no man more qualified than Commodore Eaton to determine the rarity of any type of half cent and he states without hesitation that, taking the half cents of 1796 as a standard of rarity, so generally done, the following are rarer than either type of that year. 1794, G. 2 [C-7], 3 [C-8] and 6 [C-6]: 1795, G. 7 [C-3] and 8 [C-2b]: 1797, G. 1 [C-3b]: 1802, G. 4 [sic, perhaps C-1 is meant?]: 1804, G. 9 [C-7], 10 [C-4] and 11 [C-5]; 1805, G. 4 [C-2]; and 1808, G. 3. With possible exception of the rare 1797 and 1804, G. 10 and 11, all are much rarer. This collection contains some forty rarities, about thirty of them being rarer than either 1796. If a 1796 only 'fair' brings around fifty dollars at auction, what would thirty varieties from good to fine be worth when all are rarer?²⁵

When Commodore Eaton's articles on the double cut and recut dies half cents were published in *The Numismatist* of 1921 several collectors wrote him requesting that he publish an article giving a list of the cracked and broken dies. While he never did this on account of the amount of work involved the purchaser of this collection, who will be supplied with a complete catalogue of its contents, will have such a list practically complete. The only cracked die of any importance not included in this sale being that of

²⁵ It is interesting to note that, to this day, some dealers have not yet tired of equating rarity with price while neglecting to factor in demand.

1796, G. 2 and that should readily be found in time as not so rare as the die found here, without the crack.

In addition to the United States half cents the collection contains all the varieties except two of the Massachusetts half cents, one not listed by Crosby, an autographed copy of Gilbert's work, several catalogues and copies of *The Numismatist* with Commodore Eaton's articles, and a beautiful panelled mahogany cabinet for the half cents.

As said at the opening of this announcement, it is our desire to sell this collection as a whole and we shall be glad to give full details together with the price we believe the collection to be worth to any one interested."²⁶

Several statements made in this announcement merit further comment:

1. The Alvord Collection did lack two Gilbert varieties, 1805 G. 4 [C-2] and 1808 G. 3. Of the former, Breen states, "This was one of the four or five varieties that Alvord lacked, though his collection was billed as 'complete'."²⁷ 1808 G. 3 is no longer considered a bona fide variety. Breen elaborates, "The specimen he [Gilbert] illustrated, from the Commodore Eaton collection, reappeared in the Brobston collection, said to have come by way of Ebenezer Gilbert himself. I examined it in 1952, and told Mr. Brobston what I saw; a 2-B [1808 C-3] with a dent just under the highest wave of hair, displacing the latter, pushing it nearer to R."²⁸
2. At first glance, the examination of 50,000 half cents seems implausible. However, if one considers that Breen states to have examined over 30,000 large cents in the preparation of *Penny Whimsy* in the mid-1950's,²⁹ one can well imagine being able to examine 50,000 half cents some thirty or forty years earlier.
3. The statement that the Eaton Collection contained "sixty varieties and sub-varieties of the half cents of 1794" needs to be viewed in the context of 1928. The terms "variety" and "sub-variety" seem to have encompassed what are now termed varieties, die states,

²⁶ *Guttag's Coin Bulletin* 6 (June 1928): 52-53.

²⁷ Breen, 263. Breen does not indicate who was responsible for billing the collection as "complete." It was not S.H. Chapman, for in his June 9, 1924 catalog of the Alvord collection he described the collection as "the most complete, and, in the proofs of the Half Cents of 1840 from the original dies, it is the only complete series that has ever reached auction as far as I can trace, and certainly at no sale within the last generation."

²⁸ Breen, 287.

²⁹ Breen, 35 and 38.

large and small edge letter varieties, blundered edge lettering, and reading the edge with the obverse or reverse uppermost. In 1928 usage, the 1794's in the Alvord Collection did contain 26 "varieties." As the term is currently used, the Alvord Collection contained eleven 1794 "varieties" (Cohen 1a, 1b, 2a, 2b, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9) as well as a number of die state variations. Thus, one cannot be certain about the exact nature and grades of the sixty 1794's "varieties" included in the Eaton Collection, but there seem to have been sixty 1794's!

4. That the Eaton Collection consisted of 450 half cents is entirely possible. In his 1921 article in *The Numismatist*, Eaton stated that he had "over four hundred and twenty half cents."³⁰

5. It is in the area of relative rarity that this announcement is puzzling at best. The assertion that 1796 G. 2 [C. 2] is not so rare as the variety without the crack is simply not true. It is difficult to know if this is a statement should be attributed to Eaton or to the Gutttag Brothers.

These comments aside, by any standard this was a very significant collection of half cents.

In the August 1928 issue of the *Gutttag's Coin Bulletin* this announcement appeared: "In the June issue we advertised the Eaton Collection of Half Cents. Inside of 24 hours after the Bulletin had been published we had a long distance telephone inquiry in reference to the collection and within a few weeks we received six other bona-fide inquiries for the same, but the first inquirer had already purchased the collection."³¹

This, however, begs perhaps the most important question -- who *did* purchase the collection? Alvin Gutttag, son of Julius Gutttag, was contacted. He responded, "...unfortunately I believe there are no papers presently available which will show who bought [the] Commodore William Colgate Eaton collection of half cents....these records would probably have been destroyed when the Gutttag Brothers firm was dissolved many years ago (if not earlier). My father would probably have remembered but unfortunately he died in 1962 and my uncle Henry died even earlier."³² John J. Kraljevich, Jr proposed

³⁰ W.C. Eaton, "The Recut Dies of U.S. Half Cents," *The Numismatist* 34 (November 1921): 518.

³¹ *Gutttag's Coin Bulletin* 6 (August 1928): 83. This issue was kindly provided by Bill Burd of the Chicago Coin Company.

³² Alvin Gutttag, private communication of October 25, 2003.

another line of inquiry. He suggested contacting Joe Lasser whom he described as "a collector from NY, a WWII vet who began in numismatics as an office boy for the Guttags back in the 1930s! Joe knows as much about the Guttags as anyone."³³ Copies of the two 1928 *Gutttag's Coin Bulletin* announcements were sent to Mr. Lasser. He was unfortunately, but understandably, unable to recall any of the details of this transaction now over 75 years in the past.

The only remaining clue to the identity of the purchaser is that he had to make a long distance telephone call to the Gutttag Brothers in New York City. Thomas Elder was living in New York at the time,³⁴ so it is unlikely to have been him. If one assumes that the collection was purchased by another dealer, there are several possibilities including Barney Bluestone, M.H. Bolender, Henry Chapman, S.H. Chapman, Max Mehl, and Wayte Raymond. It was probably too early in his numismatic career for the purchaser to have been Bluestone. If it had been Wayte Raymond, one could assume that Walter Breen would have known of this through his association with Raymond. On the little evidence available and given S.H. Chapman's involvement with Alvord in 1924 and Henry Chapman's with Bardeen in 1922 and Eaton in 1929, it is perhaps more likely that one of the Chapman brothers was involved in the purchase of the Eaton Collection from the Gutttag Brothers.

The Relationship between Eaton and Alvord

Based upon his statement in the 1921 letter to the editor of *The Numismatist*, Eaton began collecting again when his son was 10. As William West had been born in 1893, this would have been in 1903, when W.C. Eaton would have been at the "well advanced" age of 52. The *Gutttag's Coin Bulletin* announcement alluded to the fact that Eaton "induced Mr. Alvord to collect," presumably half cents. As stated earlier, Eaton wrote a series of articles on Flying Eagle cents. In his March 1921 article on the Flying Eagle cents of 1858, Eaton states, "It appears that when I published the first list [January, 1916] I excited the interest of that most thorough collector, Mr. F. R. Alvord of York, Pa. He, with his usual thoroughness, sent for and corralled thousands of the uncirculated

³³ John J. Kraljevich, Jr., private communication of February 2, 2004.

³⁴ Thomas K. DeLorey, "Thomas L. Elder, A Catalogue of His Tokens and Medals," *The Numismatist* 93 (June 1980): 1330.

1858's in the hands of dealers and made an exhaustive examination of them for varieties. As a result, many were found not in my previous lists, and as he has kindly turned over his finds to me, I am enabled now to make the lists fairly complete, for anything that escapes Alvord is not apt to be found by others."³⁵ Together, Eaton and Alvord enumerated 46 varieties of 1857 Flying Eagle cents and 76 varieties of 1858 Flying Eagle cents. Lot 547 of the Henry Chapman sale of the Eaton Collection was described "1857, 1858 Cents. Eagle. The entire collection as spoken of in the article in *The Numismatist*, May, 1921. 1857 No. 1 dull dark proof, four good, all others very fine to uncirculated. Each marked by Com. Eaton. 55 pcs. 1858. Also entire collection. One small letters a proof, twenty-four good to vg., the balance very fine, nearly all uncirculated. 60 pcs. – a grand total of 115 pcs."³⁶ The lot was purchased by Floyd T. Starr.³⁷ Eaton and Alvord were incredibly thorough and meticulous in their analysis, assigning their varieties on the basis of very fine distinctions. In his book on Flying Eagle and Indian Cents, Rick Snow describes this analysis as "an exhaustive study of minor die varieties...the description of die cracks and other minor varieties is beyond the scope of this, and probably any reference."³⁸

Eaton and Alvord had undoubtedly devoted the same care and attention to the study of half cents. Alvord traveled regularly to New York City for business and would have had ample opportunity to visit coin dealers there. York, Pennsylvania is relatively close to Philadelphia, and it also would have been possible for him to visit dealers there as well. It is known that Alvord frequently visited his hometown of Hamilton, New York. W.C. Eaton resided at 31 Madison Street; Alvord's father, C. Theodore Alvord, lived at 19 Payne Street, only a few minutes walk away. One can well imagine Alvord going home to visit his parents,³⁹ and then walking up to the Commodore's house with a recently acquired parcel of half cents for their perusal. It was through this collaboration that Alvord put together "arguably the best collection ever of half cents"⁴⁰ and that Eaton

³⁵ W.C. Eaton, "The Eagle Cents of 1858," *The Numismatist* 34 (March 1921): 87.

³⁶ Henry Chapman, *Collection of Coins and Numismatic Books of Commodore W.C. Eaton, U.S.N.* (Philadelphia: H. Chapman, 1929): 27

³⁷ Floyd T. Starr, "Letter to the Editor," *The Numismatist* 67 (July 1954): 711. Starr also stated that the collection was still intact at the time of his writing.

³⁸ Rick Snow, *Flying Eagle and Indian Cents* (Tucson, AZ: Eagle Eye Press, 1992): 39.

³⁹ He died before both his mother and father.

⁴⁰ John W. Adams, *United States Numismatic Literature, Volume I: Nineteenth Century Auction Catalogs* (Mission Viejo, CA: George Frederick Kolbe Publications, 1982): 93.

discovered the small and large letter edge varieties of 1794. Thus, the relationship between Eaton and Alvord played a significant role in the development of the collecting of half cents in this country.

Postscript

Located on a hill on the campus of Colgate University is the College Cemetery. Buried there are several generations of the Eaton clan, including George Washington Eaton, William Colgate Eaton, and Torrey Wade Eaton. A bronze plaque on the burial site of Torrey Wade Eaton reads:

IN MEMORY OF
TORREY WADE EATON
LIEUTENANT JUNIOR GRADE
UNITED STATES NAVY

BORN NEW YORK CITY NOVEMBER 7,
1919. GRADUATED WESTERN RESERVE
ACADEMY, HUDSON, OHIO, 1937.
GRADUATED UNITED STATES NAVAL
ACADEMY, 1941.

MISSING IN ACTION AT THE BATTLE
OF SANTA CRUZ, OCTOBER 26, 1942,
AFTER A JAPANESE TORPEDO PLANE
CRASHED INTO THE FORECASTLE OF
HIS SHIP THE U.S.S. SMITH SETTING
IT ON FIRE. WHILE THE CREW
FOUGHT THE FLAMES FULL ESCORT
SPEED WAS MAINTAINED AND ALL
GUNS KEPT FIRING.

HE WAS DECLARED DECEASED BY THE
NAVY DEPARTMENT AS OF OCTOBER
27, 1943 AND WAS POSTHUMOUSLY
AWARDED THE PRESIDENTIAL UNIT
CITATION AND THE PURPLE HEART.

One can assume that the Commodore would have been extremely proud of his "beloved grandson" who had followed in his naval footsteps. It is not known if Torrey ever received his grandfather's gold watch.